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ABSTRACT

This report discusses the 1997 amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act that require states to develop alternate assessments for students with disabilities who cannot participate in large-scale assessment programs. The report also profiles five state alternate assessment practices that have been developed or are emerging and defines seven issues that must be addressed in developing an alternate assessment, including: why assess, who to assess, what to assess, when to assess, how to assess and score, how to report and use data, and how to engage in development and training. Practices in Colorado, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, and Missouri are described. As appropriate to its stage of alternate assessment development, each state report describes background and context, foundations, eligibility, content standards, assessment procedures, scoring, reporting and use, professional development, development and management, and effects. Findings indicate that most states are attempting to develop the alternate assessment as an extension of the general assessment system, with an emphasis on both accountability and program improvement. Eligibility criteria are still evolving, but it was found the alternate assessments are intended for students who have the most significant disabilities. (CR)

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Alternate Assessment Issues and Practices

May, 1998

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INTRODUCTION AND ISSUES
Ken Olsen

Introduction

The 1997 amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA '97) have created intensive interest and activity in developing alternate assessments for students with disabilities who cannot participate in large-scale assessment programs. The law states that in order to be eligible for federal funding under IDEA, children with disabilities must be included in general state and district-wide assessment programs with appropriate accommodations when necessary. Significantly, the law states

> *as appropriate, the State or local agency-(i) develops guidelines for the participation of children with disabilities in **alternate assessments** for those children who cannot participate in State and district-wide assessment programs; and (ii) develops and, beginning not later than July 1, 2000 conducts those **alternate assessments**.* Section 612 (a)(17).

In addition to the requirement to conduct Alternate Assessments, there are specific requirements for:

- reporting the number of children participating in Alternate Assessments (612)(a)(17)(B)(ii),
- reporting the performance of students on Alternate Assessments after July 1, 2000 (612)(a)(17)(B)(iii),
- ensuring that IEP teams determine how each student will participate in large-scale assessment and if not participating in the general assessment how the child will be assessed (Section 614)(d)(1)(A)(v), and
- reflecting the performance of all students with disabilities in performance goals and indicators that are used to guide State Improvement Plans [612(a)(16)(D)].

The potential benefits and costs of Alternate Assessments were discussed in the Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) by the U. S. Office of Special Education Programs (emphasis ours):

> *...States were not previously required to conduct **alternate assessments** for children who could not participate in the general assessments. The statutory requirement to develop and conduct **alternate assessments** beginning July 1, 2000, therefore, imposes a new cost for states and districts. The impact of this change will depend on the extent to which states and districts administer general assessments, the number of children who cannot appropriately participate in those assessments, the cost of developing and administering **Alternate Assessments**, and the extent to which children with disabilities are already participating in **Alternate Assessments**. In analyzing the impact of this requirement, the Secretary assumes that alternate tests would be administered to children with disabilities on roughly the same schedule as general assessments.....Based on the experience of states that have implemented **Alternate Assessments** for children with disabilities, the Secretary estimates that about one to two percent of the children in any age cohort will be taking **Alternate Assessments**... Many children with disabilities are already being assessed outside the regular assessment program in order to determine their progress in meeting their objectives in their IEPs. In many cases, these assessments might be adequate to meet the new statutory requirement.*

However, there is little direction to states as to what an alternate assessment is, what its purpose should be, or what population is most appropriate for alternate assessment. The assumption is that this lack of direction is intentional - allowing the states to decide for themselves.

Unfortunately, there is little information to help states make those decisions. Since the enactment of IDEA in June of 1997, there has been a tremendous flurry of state activity. However, at the time of this writing, only two states had initiated a large-scale alternate assessment process that produced aggregate information - Kentucky and Maryland. Of those two, the Kentucky system was operational and the Maryland system was in a pilot phase. Therefore, there were few models upon which to build. The only other resources were some documents issued by the National Center on Educational Outcomes and some of the Regional Resource Centers (Ysseldyke, Olsen, and Thurlow, 1997; Ysseldyke and Olsen, 1997; Thurlow, Olsen, Elliott, Ysseldyke, Erickson and Ahearn, 1996; MSRRC, 1996). The National Center on Educational Outcomes has been working with states to document their status through a "CyberSurvey." If readers wish to review the entire database and see the complete list of states that have entered information, they can go to the following website address:

http://206.147.58.9/survey/fullsearch.html.

The CyberSurvey will ask users for two pieces of information: a name and a password. For "Read Only" access use "survey" (without quotes) for name and use "visitor" (without quotes) for password. Even with this resource, states are mostly left to their own devices in developing their alternate assessments.

Therefore, the purpose of this document is to serve as a resource for state education agencies (and local education agencies when no large-scale assessments are being developed at the state level). The paper defines seven issues that a developer must address and then provides narrative descriptions of five state alternate assessment practices that have been developed or are emerging. These state practices have been selected to reflect a variety of assessment approaches and contexts. As appropriate to its stage of development, each state report describes:

- Background and context;
- Foundations;
- Eligibility;
- Content standards;
- Assessment procedures;
- Scoring, reporting, and use;
- Professional development;
- Development and management; and
- Effects

Issues a Developer Must Address

Prior to the enactment of IDEA '97, Ysseldyke, Olsen, and Thurlow (1997) outlined thirteen issues they considered significant to be addressed in developing an alternate assessment. As states have gained experience in developing or attempting to develop alternate assessments, all of these issues have been confirmed and additional issues have arisen. Therefore, it is necessary to restate and reclassify the issues. The issues can be categorized in seven major question areas:

1. Why assess?
2. Who to assess?
3. What to assess?
4. When to assess?

5. How to assess and score?
6. How to report and use data?
7. How to engage in development and training?

The state practices described in later sections have all addressed these issues to at least some extent. The purpose of this section is to help states identify the questions they must ask themselves and some of the challenges they must face. The Mid-South RRC is developing detailed resources on each of these issues and each uses various state experiences and products as examples. The purpose of this section is simply to highlight the issues, not to present the author's bias regarding a state's answers.

1. Why assess?

Among the most crucial issues to be addressed in developing an alternate assessment is why do it at all. The ultimate assessment will reflect a specific philosophy or set of assumptions that must be made clear at the outset. Is the purpose of the alternate assessment the same as the purpose of the general assessment but specifically for a limited population? Is the alternate assessment primarily focused on program improvement, accountability, public relations, or policy development? Who will be the primary user of the assessment data and is that user in the classroom, at the school building level, in the district central office, or at the state level? What is the intended consequence of the alternate assessment system? Will the alternate assessment be included in accountability indices and findings for school district accreditation purposes? To what extent will the alternate assessment reflect an inclusive education system that uses or expands upon the content and performance standards for all students and to what extent will it drive a separate system? What is the role of various stakeholders, including students with disabilities and parents, in making decisions about the development of the system?

All of these questions are essential parameters that must be defined at some level prior to the development of an alternate assessment system. Failure to address the issues of foundational beliefs and assumptions can lead to ongoing debates and many false starts unless those issues are resolved early on. In fact, many states have found it important to document their beliefs or assumptions in clear statements of consensus. Specifically, the links to the general education assessment system, clear understanding of the purpose of the assessment, and the specific target users and uses appear to be critical elements for definition.

2. Who to assess?

Defining eligibility for the alternate assessment is another critical early step prior to defining any assessment practices. Among the most crucial issues to address are (a) how do we define who should be included in an alternate assessment, and (b) what is the basis for deciding when a student "cannot participate" in large-scale assessments or when large-scale assessments are "not appropriate" as stated in the law. Olsen (1998) has suggested that students can be included in large-scale assessment systems in four ways. Some can take the regular large- scale assessment without accommodations, some can take the large-scale assessment with accommodations that do not violate test norms, some must have an alternate assessment, and some have accommodations in the general education assessment that are so great that the measure is not comparable to other measures. States are struggling with how broadly to define alternate assessment without opening the floodgates for all students. Should caps be set (e.g., the 2% level recommended in the NPRM), or would this artificially define and limit the population or possibly set a goal and increase numbers artificially? Should the population be defined on the basis of inclusion in the regular education curriculum and, if so, is that overly limiting given the fact that many students are not currently included but could be included in that curriculum? Should the basis be whether a student will graduate with a diploma and, if so, does it depend upon the diploma requirements in each state? To what extent is it important to use the focus on functional versus academic skills as a criterion? How are students to be selected, especially when students are in nongraded programs and the large-scale assessment is for specific grade levels? How will decisions get made and by

whom? To what extent is the IEP team to make the decision and how can the state ensure that IEP teams are making consistent decisions that are fair across districts, especially in high stakes situations? How does a state ensure compliance with its policies for determining eligibility in alternate assessments? Ultimately, how does a state establish criteria that ensure fairness and comparability? Eligibility decisions have significant influence on what to assess, how to assess, and how information is to be used.

3. What to assess?

The third significant issue that a state must consider is the basis for the assessment. Probably the most important issue in this arena is the extent to which the state standards for the alternate assessment will be the same as the state standards and curriculum for all students. Will the content standards be the same but the performance standards vary? How will a state ensure "high standards" for all students when it is recognized that this population of students usually has significant cognitive disabilities? If a state has broad, functional standards for all students will the approach be different than if a state has specific academic content standards? To what extent can the state standards be extended or adapted to deal with more functional or life skill areas? To what extent can some of the general education standards be used while adding and extending others? If more functional content or performance standards are used, to what extent will a message about a separate special education focus be delivered? What are the graduation, promotion, or certificate implications of using different standards and how will those be reconciled? Should the alternate assessment be a broad-scale measure of a student's total experience to determine overall skills rather than a number of separate measures in specific curricular areas? What is the link between the IEP and the standards being assessed and is it essential that there be a close match? Is there a difference when the purpose of the assessment is broad-scale assessment versus individual student assessment?

An additional arena that deserves special attention is the extent to which one can level the playing field for all students who have significant disabilities and cannot participate in the general education assessment. It has been pointed out that students with the most severe cognitive disabilities have a range of other disabilities and often exhibit greater variance than the rest of the population put together. Some such students have excellent communication and information processing skills and others have minimal ability to take in, process, and respond to stimuli. To what extent can a state do what Maryland and Kentucky have done and include in the large-scale assessment such factors as opportunity to learn and existence of LEA supports? Is the assessment different when assessing school performance versus individual student accountability? Is it proper and feasible to include such things as the use of natural supports, use of natural environments, and involvement with typical peers as opposed to putting the entire emphasis on individual student skills and performance?

4. When to assess?

This issue, while perhaps not as significant as other issues, still raises some concerns. For example, the question has been posed "alternate to what?" Must there be an alternate for every large-scale assessment that is used in a district or state? Is it necessary to have multiple alternate assessments when a state has a norm referenced test, a criterion referenced test, end-of-course tests, end-of-grade tests, and other measures used in the general education curriculum? Should the alternate assessment only relate to those measures that are used for accountability purposes? What should be done when the large-scale assessment program is administered to students in every grade every year?

Additionally, the time of testing is important. Should the testing occur at exactly the same time as the general assessment? If so, how does one ensure that the assessment is adequate when such students may take longer to gather and process information? To what extent can the alternate assessment look at longitudinal data versus a snapshot of a particular point and time? Is it possible to use an alternate assessment approach that looks at a cadre of students over time rather than

students in a particular grade level at a particular point in time? Can repeated measures be used rather than a single measure? These issues of test timing, sequence, and matches to the general assessment are crucial to ensuring that the intended purpose is achieved.

5. How to assess and score?
Probably the most frequent question being asked of consultants regarding development of alternate assessments is "how?" Once the first four issues have been addressed this is a very appropriate question and not easy to answer. Among the issues to be addressed is whether there will be a single measure or multiple measures and whether those would be administered at a single point in time or over time. The development of such measures will require time to establish reliability and validity, yet they must be in place by July of 2000. Therefore, how will the state justify the validity and reliability of its measures? Will it be on the basis of the ultimate consequences or on the specific psychometric characteristics of the particular measures? How will the state address the issues of feasibility and cost-benefit? How will feasibility be balanced with reliability and validity? For example, measures that take longer and gather in-depth information are less feasible and more costly than the typical multiple choice and open response items used in general education assessments. To what extent will equitable treatment and burden for teachers be considered? For example, should teachers who are working with alternate assessments have to do more or less work than teachers who have students who take the general education assessment? To what extent should the measures that are used in the alternate assessment look like and reflect the language of the measures that are used for all students (e.g. portfolios, performance tasks, other direct measures)? Among the options considered for assessment would be the use of portfolios, performance tasks, IEPs, parent or teacher surveys, adaptive behavior skills, videotaped observations, interviews, and record reviews. Are any of these more or less feasible relative to the state's context? Is it possible to use multiple methods and still be feasible? How will items be scored and will the scores be comparable to those for all students? For example, is it possible to use a rubric that parallels a rubric for other students? Will a holistic score be provided (i.e., one that encompasses a range of competencies or competencies and conditions), or will separate scores be provided for each content area? Will scoring be external or conducted by teachers? To what extent will the IEP play a role in the process and, if so, how will the state ensure that IEPs are not negatively affected by the accountability nature of the assessment (e.g. reducing the "stretch" in goals and objectives in order to show progress)?

6. How to report and use data?
The issues and answers in the area of reporting and using data must be 100% consistent with the philosophy defined in the first issue, because the use of data consistent with the intended purpose and audiences demonstrates integrity. Therefore, the questions that a developer must address include a full range of issues. Among these issues are to what extent will data be aggregated and reported separately for alternate assessments versus included in a general report of all students? To what extent will some bridging indices be prepared to ensure that alternate assessments are considered in accountability for local school districts as well as simple reporting? To what extent should alternate assessment data be considered in determining rewards and sanctions for teachers, schools, and districts? How will confidentiality be protected when few numbers of students are included in an alternate assessment and reporting by school or especially classroom could violate confidentiality? When will reports on alternate assessment be made available and will they be provided in sufficient time to accomplish the intended purpose? How will results be communicated in ways that lead to the intended consequences? Will they be provided to parents, teachers, administrators, and others in different formats or a common format? To what extent will the data provide not simply a status level (e.g., "apprentice") but provide information regarding specific skill and competency areas? Most important, how will the developers and implementers ensure that data are used in ways that do not violate the agreements established at the beginning of this effort?

7. How to engage in development and training?

Among some of the most important issues are the development, management, and training issues. Significant among these is the extent to which stakeholders and local school district personnel will be involved in the development of the system in order to ensure relevance and commitment. To what extent will the language used in the alternate assessment reflect the language used in the overall assessment so that teachers and administrators can communicate and feel a part of a larger whole? For example, will the same language regarding indicators, goals, standards, curriculum, rubrics, measures, etc. be used in both aspects of the assessment? How will policy maker commitment be ensured and how will communication occur with policy makers throughout the development? To what extent will it be essential to go through state board approval of the standards for the alternate assessment at the same level that standards were approved for all students? Who will actually develop this system? Will it be developed by an external contractor, or funded through an agreement with a local school district, a request for proposal process, pilot projects in local school districts, or in other ways? Who will pay? Will the funding for the alternate assessment come from special education or is it more appropriate to have the funding source be the same for the alternate as for the general assessment? Can special education fund the development with general education funding the maintenance? How will development be timed to ensure the system goes through appropriate measures of confirming the philosophy; developing or extending the standards; developing, piloting and validating the measures; training personnel; implementing the system; and reporting in time to meet the July 1, 2000 deadline? Finally, how will users be trained? Will the ongoing maintenance and updating of the system be used as a training tool (e.g., via common scoring events)?

The issues in perspective.

These seven issues present significant challenges for a state developing alternate assessment within its large-scale assessment program. No state has satisfactorily addressed all of the issues. However, a number of states have taken significant initial steps. The state practice descriptions that follow describe how Colorado, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, and Missouri have taken initial strides toward fully inclusive large-scale assessment systems.

STATE PRACTICE: COLORADO

Sue Bechard

Background and Context

Demographics

Colorado's total public school membership has increased since 1983, with large increases in the past 7 years. Current K-12 enrollment is over 650,000.

- Fifty-four percent of public school students attended school in one of the 15 Denver metro districts. Less than 5 % of students reside in the 86 rural school districts.

- Ethnic minority students account for 28% of the total student membership. Hispanic students comprise the largest minority group, representing 18% of the total student population.

- Students with disabilities, ages birth through 21, represent 10.5 % of total school membership and 8.8 % of the state's 3-17 population. The vast majority of children with disabilities are served within their administrative unit of residence (96.7%). Eighty-two percent of special education students were served within their home school (State Report Card, 1996).

State administration of special education is accomplished through grouping the 176 school districts into 52 Administrative Units, divided into five geographic regions. Many districts are large enough to comprise a single Administrative Unit. Smaller districts are organized into Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) and represent 20 of the Administrative Units.

Legislation

Standards Based Education was initiated in 1993, with the passage of education reform legislation, House Bill 93-1313. This legislation put into action procedures which led to the adoption of the State Model Content Standards.

Subsequent legislation instituted the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP). Because Colorado is a local control state, the statute also mandated the adoption of district standards that meet or exceed the state model standards by January 1, 1997. In addition, local districts must develop assessments to evaluate student progress on content areas and grade levels not assessed through the state assessment program. The legislation provided that students in special education may work on "individual standards" as determined on their Individual Education Plans (IEPs).

- CTB/McGraw Hill is the assessment contractor and is assisting in the development of the state tests, which include traditional and performance task items, and are customized to measure student proficiencies related to Colorado's state standards. Scores are reported in four proficiency levels.

- The state assessment program began in April 1997, testing all fourth-grade students in reading and writing. Assessments are added progressively: third-grade reading in Spring 1998; seventh-grade reading and writing in Spring 1999; fifth-grade math in Fall 1999; eighth-grade math and science in Spring 2000; and tenth-grade reading, writing, and math in Spring 2001. Students who score below the "proficient" level on the tenth-grade tests will be reassessed when they reach the twelfth grade.

- HB93-1313 requires that assessment results are disaggregated by gender, ethnicity, and separate disability categories. In addition, data are gathered on each test to document special program status (Title I, Section 504, special education), language background, time in district and school, and accommodations used.

In addition to HB93-1313, the Colorado legislature passed the Colorado Basic Literacy Act in 1996. Rules for the administration of that statute specify that the third-grade reading test will be used as part of a body of evidence to determine if a student requires an Individualized Literacy Plan to achieve reading proficiency at grade level. Students in special education may be exempted from these requirements if their disability is a substantial cause of their inability to read and comprehend at grade level.

New legislation just emerged to describe the educational accreditation process. The Educational Accreditation Act of 1998 incorporates student achievement results on state standards-based tests as one of the accreditation indicators for school districts. Other accreditation indicators include the percentage of students taking the statewide assessments and the percentage of students who are exempt from the general assessment program.

Accountability Policies

The state determined that all students will be accounted for in the state assessment program. A test protocol must be filled out for every student, whether they take the test or not, and the reason for nonparticipation must be indicated. When reporting assessment results, students who were not tested will be counted in the denominator when averages of student achievement are reported by proficiency levels. Additionally, scores of students in center-based programs are reported with their neighborhood school of origin. For confidentiality purposes, disaggregated results will not be published if fewer than 15 students are involved.

Foundations

In June 1997, the Special Education Services Unit of the Colorado Department of Education began a three-pronged initiative which will result in the development of standards, assessments, and a decision-making process for alternate assessments.
The three initiatives are:

Expanded Standards Task Force

- This committee includes 25 representatives from districts across the state, including general and special education building and district administrators, general and special education teachers across all grade levels, advocates, parents of students with disabilities, and state department of education personnel.

- The charge of this group is to create a data-driven accountability system for students who need an expanded standard/curriculum/assessment process, to develop recommendations for reporting student performance on those students for whom the general state assessment is not appropriate, and to define parameters for the use and impact of standards for students with the most intense support needs.

Access Skills and Self-Determination Task Force

- This committee is creating a prototype of an expanded assessment of access skills needed to succeed in content standards and in the workplace. Self-determination is an important element in all access skills.

- This committee will develop benchmarks for proficiency in each component and will develop and compile strategies and instruments to measure student performance in each component of self-determination.

Standards and the IEP Task Force

- This committee is designing a data-driven decision-making process as part of the IEP to determine how students with disabilities will participate in standards and assessments.

- Specifically, it will recommend appropriate data to verify the decision, provide examples of measurable goals in access skills and standards, recommend methods of including IEP data as part of a body of evidence in an alternate assessment system, and recommend methods of aggregating IEP data for accountability purposes.

Before beginning their work in June 1997, the three task forces developed a common philosophical foundation:

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

We believe that:

- Colorado must have a system of accountability for student performance that includes ALL students.
- Accountability for results resides at the state, district, building and classroom, and individual student levels.
- ALL students can be challenged to higher levels of achievement.
- ALL students must have the opportunity to access the general curriculum.
- ALL students will participate in general standards and the state assessment process. Individual student needs will drive the decision on how each student will participate.
- ALL Students have a right to instruction that meets their unique needs. This involves providing appropriate opportunities for success and intentional instruction in critical access skills (Essential Learnings and Workplace Competencies).
- Standards, assessments, curriculum, and instruction must be aligned for ALL students.
- For students with IEPs, any given standard may have benchmarks that may be expanded, modified, or both.
- Student performance data should guide policy.
- Transition planning: Practice with transition skills and other critical access skills should occur with practice in content skills.

Eligibility

Criteria

Since Colorado does not yet have an alternate assessment in place, the population of students who will be included in the alternate assessment is currently defined by the criteria for nonparticipation in the general assessment under the heading*: Students with Disabilities for Whom the Assessment May Be Inappropriate:*

> The general assessment may not be appropriate for a very small number of students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). These students are working on individualized

standards rather than on the district-adopted standards for the content areas being assessed [Colorado Revised Statutes, Section 4,22-20-108(4)] due to the severity of their disability.

It is important to give students the opportunity to participate. Therefore, teachers should attempt the assessment with the student, using the approved list of accommodations when needed, and, if the student is still not able to participate, document the attempt.

In addition, there may be a few students for whom the IEP team has determined that the general state assessment is not appropriate. In that case, an assessment is not attempted, but the decision not to assess must be documented.

The participation decision must be based on the following considerations:

- The unique needs of the individual student, not the specific disability category or program, and
- The student's IEP that documents the need for individualized standards in the assessed content area and the student's inability to participate even with accommodations.

The decision must not be made on:

- Poor attendance by the student.
- Ongoing disruptive behavior by the student.
- Student's reading level (keep in mind that the assessment includes passages, prompts, and items that are on grade level, below grade level, and above grade level).
- Expectation of poor performance for the student.

Projected percentages
The first CSAP assessment was given in April 1997. While the accountability process was not uniformly implemented, the results may be viewed generally. Only 4% of the total population of fourth-grade students reportedly did not participate in the Reading and Writing assessment. This included students who were not proficient in English or Spanish (a Spanish assessment was available), students whose parents asked that they not participate, students who did not complete the test due to absences, test booklets which were unscorable, and students with IEPs who could not participate, even with accommodations.

Content Standards

Content Areas Assessed
State Model Content Standards have been adopted in the areas of Reading, Writing, Geography, Mathematics, Science, and History by the State Board of Education in 1994. A second round of standards are in the process of adoption, including Foreign Language, Physical Education, Music, Visual Arts, Economics, and Civics. The state will assess in some of these content areas (see Background and Context above). School districts are required to assess in the remaining areas.

The three task forces have agreed that the standards upon which the alternate assessments will be based will be an extension of the state standards and benchmarks, rather than separate standards. To achieve this, Colorado has developed a process to develop appropriate standards based on a combination of two elements, the academically related skills (key components) and the nonacademic skills (access skills) necessary for achievement in school and life

Expanded Standards

Expanded Standards and Assessments are extensions of the benchmark, assessment, or both necessary to meet the standards, focused on the:

- key components,
- related access skills,
- or any combination thereof.

A Key Component of the standard is determined by interpreting the benchmark to the essential concepts. For example, when working with a Reading and Writing standard, to read and understand a variety of materials, the benchmarks could be interpreted at a functional level to be:

- gaining meaning from visual symbols
- creating sound and symbol associations
- attending to stimuli connected to reading materials
- attaching meaning to symbols and other's words or both

Examples of key components have been developed for Reading, Writing, and Mathematics.

Access Skills are the underlying skills needed to reach specific indicators for standards, life outcomes, and community membership. Examples of access skills needed in the area of Communication and Basic Language skills are:

- attending,
- listening,
- responding to others,
- gaining and maintaining attention, and
- using alternative communication methods.

Access skills have been identified in the areas of Communication and Basic Language, Decision Making and Problem Solving, Self-Advocacy, Self-Determination, Physical, Inter/Intrapersonal, Organization, Technology, and Career Development.

These categories are the result of two large bodies of work produced in Colorado. One set is from the Essential Learnings identified in *Opportunities for Success*, published by the Special Populations Task Force (1996). The second set evolved from the identification of Workplace Competencies from the School-to-Career initiative.

Current efforts are focusing on how the access skills and key components will be identified for individual students. Exemplar case studies are being developed using a matrix-based decision-making process to:

- guide the planning and expansion of standards to address individual student learning needs;
- translate decisions into IEP goals, benchmarks, and objectives;
- provide a framework for how students will access the general curriculum;
- frame expected student performance for general educators; and
- provide the foundation for assessing a student's growth toward the standard(s).

Assessment Procedures

Plans for the development of the alternate assessment system are underway. A three-day working conference will be held in June 1998. Sources of information that provide a general direction for this work are:

- The National Center for Educational Outcomes Synthesis Report 28, *Putting Alternate Assessments into Practice: What to Measure and Possible Sources of Data;*
- The Colorado Basic Literacy Act identification of a body of evidence; and
- Kentucky Alternate Portfolio scoring workshop.

Colorado is hopeful that an alternate assessment will be available before the July 2000 time frame required by IDEA '97.

Scoring, Reporting, And Use

Several state policies are already in place and will extend to the alternate assessments when available:

- Scores will be reported at least in a composite report and will be disaggregated by disability category,
- Reports will be available at state, district, building and individual student levels,
- Scores will not be reported for any entity containing fewer than 15 students, and
- Scores will be utilized for building accreditation purposes.

Professional Development

To be determined

Development and Management

To be determined

Effects

There is an anticipation for the alternate assessment, due to the statistical impact of total student accountability at this time. School administrators are anxiously awaiting scores which will be available for those students who currently are receiving no scores on the general assessments.

STATE PRACTICE: KENTUCKY

Sarah Kennedy

Background and Context

In 1990, Kentucky enacted the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA). A key component of KERA was the mandate for a comprehensive performance-based assessment and accountability system inclusive of all students. This statewide assessment would: (a) be based on the key learner outcomes identified for all students, (b) be performance based in that it would assess learning relevant to 'real-life' demands and meaningful contexts, (c) drive school improvement through rewards for schools that improved their accountability scores and sanctions for schools that did not, and (d) exempt no student from accountability.

Foundations

The Kentucky Department of Education charged the Kentucky Disability and Diversity Subcommittee on Assessment and Accountability with the task of determining the extent to which students with severe disabilities could participate in the assessment system, and how that participation would be documented (as required by state law) and assessed. The Disability and Diversity Subcommittee, in turn, invited the Kentucky Statewide Systems Change Project for Students with Severe Disabilities in January 1992 to assist in resolving these questions.

After considerable debate about the potential implications of a 'two-tiered' accountability system, the Disability and Diversity Subcommittee recommended in the Spring of 1992 to the Kentucky Department of Education that an alternate assessment system be developed for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. In July 1992, the Kentucky Department of Education, the Kentucky Statewide Systems Change Project for Students with Severe Disabilities, and Advanced Systems In Measurement and Evaluation, Inc. (the state's primary contractor for the development of the assessment system), in conjunction with representative classroom teachers, university faculty, and local district administrators, convened a state-level steering and advisory committee to develop the Alternate Portfolio in less than one year.

Eligibility

Despite this compressed time frame, the Advisory Committee was guided throughout by the framework of Kentucky's regular assessment system. The primary difference was that the Alternate Portfolio was designed specifically for those students for whom their Individual Education Program (IEP) Committee has determined that the regular assessment program is not a meaningful measure of learning. Students whose limitations in cognitive functioning prevent the completion of Kentucky's regular program of studies (mastery of a required set of Carnegie units) even with extended school services and other program modifications and adaptations, and who require extensive instruction in multiple, community-referenced settings to insure skill acquisition, maintenance, and generalization to 'real-life' contexts, are eligible for participation in the Alternate Portfolio. Current state data indicate that approximately .6 percent of public school students (i.e., those students with the most significant cognitive disabilities) meet the eligibility criteria for the alternate system.

Content Standards

To ensure that the state's alternate system reflected the expectations of the regular system for these students, the Kentucky Alternate Portfolio Advisory Committee first considered the extent to which Kentucky's 75 academic expectations (now 54 expectations) for all students applied to the educational needs of students with severe disabilities. For each of the three assessed grade levels (4th, 8th, and 12th grade), the committee reviewed each outcome in turn, including specific applications of that outcome for students with significant disabilities and the outcome's overall educational importance for students with severe disabilities. Prioritized outcomes were identified by considering the critical function underlying each outcome. For example, for the outcome of Interpersonal Relationships: Observing, analyzing, and interpreting human behaviors to acquire a better understanding of self, others, and human relationships, the critical function essential to all students could be restated as "initiates and maintains interactions leading to friendships."

Having identified a subset of 28 of Kentucky's academic expectations representing underlying critical functions of fundamental importance to all students, the steering committee next considered the content and format of the alternate assessment, as well as its scoring standards. Given the heterogeneous needs of students with the most significant disabilities, the advisory group strived to develop a framework for designing individual student portfolios sufficiently flexible to address a wide range of student performances and products and to create holistic scoring standards that would not automatically penalize students with severe and profound cognitive disabilities because their instructional programs often targeted more basic skills.

Assessment Procedures

The Kentucky Alternate Portfolio Advisory Committee, as part of the initial development process, identified a set of key parameters for the Alternate Portfolio. First, each student's portfolio in the alternate system would be comprised of multiple entries, some of which would be required entries and some of which would be entries of the student's own choosing. Secondly, the Alternate Portfolio would contain a sufficient range of entries (and entry types) so as to comprise an accurate representation of both what the student had learned and the quality of the learning opportunities that the school had provided for the student. Among the entries, components, or both identified as essential for every Alternate Portfolio were:

- The student's primary mode of communication. This is a critical component in that a considerable number of students who meet the eligibility criteria for the Alternate Portfolio cannot communicate verbally and thus may need an alternative or augmentative way of communicating, such as picture communication systems, signing or gesturing, or both. This portfolio requirement of a documented communication system is founded on the fundamental assumption that a primary focus of education for all students should be to equip them with an adequate means of communicating in their everyday environments.

- The student's daily/weekly schedule. This schedule must be presented in the form in which the student is learning to use it (e.g., a printed schedule for a student who can read, a picture schedule for a nonreader, or an object symbol shelf for a student with deaf-blindness and multiple disabilities) and include a description of how the student uses that individualized schedule to initiate and monitor his or her own activities throughout the day. Performance data on how the student is learning to use his or her daily schedule must be attached as well.

- A student letter to the reviewer. This letter should indicate why the different portfolio entries have been chosen and it should identify the entry the student would rate as his or her best or

favorite. This letter can be written as a collaborative effort with typical peers, as long as the level of assistance provided the student is clearly indicated.

- Projects and investigations. To the maximum extent possible, each portfolio entry should involve nondisabled peers and focus on one or more of the learner outcomes for all students. Students can include both individual and group projects and are encouraged to work in heterogeneous, cooperative learning groups. At least one of these entries should incorporate clear evidence of learned skills through the presentation of systematic instructional data.

- A work resume for students in the 12th grade. This resume should indicate in-school and community job experiences, including employer evaluations, if available.

- A letter from the student's parents or guardian. This letter should indicate their level of satisfaction with the student's portfolio entries and educational outcomes. This letter can be written or dictated by the parent(s) and also gives the parent an opportunity to describe the extent to which their son or daughter is able to apply skills learned in school in family and community settings and activities. At this point, the Alternate Portfolio is the only component of Kentucky's assessment system that mandates the opportunity for parent review and comment upon the student's work as an actual part of the portfolio.

Scoring, Reporting, and Use

Throughout the development process, the Alternate Portfolio Advisory Committee determined that the evaluation or scoring standards should reflect "best practices" for outcomes and programs for students with moderate and severe disabilities. Fortunately, there is reasonable consensus as to what constitutes both best practices and meaningful outcomes for these students.

The six scoring standards for the Alternate Portfolio, developed by the Alternate Portfolio Advisory Committee in the Summer of 1992 as part of the initial portfolio development process, included:

- Standard 1: The student's ability to perform targeted skills (typically an IEP objective) and to plan, initiate, monitor, and evaluate his or her own performance on those targeted skills within and across entries.

- Standard 2: The degree to which any needed assistance is provided via natural supports, such as peer buddies, peer tutors, and co-workers in job sites, as opposed to evidence of assistance provided by paid staff only.

- Standard 3: The development of peer interaction skills and mutual friendships with typical peers. While the presence of multiple peer interactions is fairly easy to rate, one of the most challenging aspects in developing the alternate assessment scoring criteria was the determination of what exactly constitutes clear documentation of mutual friendships.

- Standard 4: Student outcomes evidenced across multiple school and community settings. For elementary-age students, emphasis is placed on performance in a wide variety of integrated or inclusive school settings. For older students, community-based performance is given increasing weight in conjunction with integrated school and class settings.

- Standard 5: The use of appropriate technology and adaptive or assistive devices within age-appropriate, functional, and integrated activities, and the systematic evidence of student choice-making throughout the school day, as evidenced both within and across portfolio entries.

- Standard 6: Documented performance of Kentucky's learner outcomes identified for all students (e.g., ability to communicate effectively, to use quantitative or numerical concepts in real life problems, to use effective interpersonal skills, etc.) evidenced across the major life domains (personal management, recreation and leisure, and vocational) that are the focus of a community-referenced and integrated curriculum.

Each of these standards were, in turn, restated to represent Kentucky's four performance levels for its regular assessment system: Novice, Apprentice, Proficient, and Distinguished. For example, at the Novice level, the Alternate Portfolio Interactions standard is described as "responds to interactions mainly with teacher and family;" at the Distinguished level, this same standard is described as "has clearly established mutual friendships with nondisabled peers."

For each standard and performance level, specific scoring criteria were identified through a benchmarking process. During Summer 1993, members of the Alternate Portfolio Advisory Committee met with additional teachers, local administrators, and university personnel from throughout the state to identify benchmark portfolios representative of each of the four performance levels of novice, apprentice, proficient, and distinguished. These benchmark portfolios were selected from a sample of all the Alternate Portfolios developed during the 1992-1993 school year, the first year of portfolio implementation, with new benchmarks chosen each subsequent year. Benchmark portfolios represented clear-cut examples of performance for each of the four performance levels (e.g., the portfolio selected as the 8th "Apprentice Benchmark" scored at the Apprentice performance level in all or nearly all of the six individual standards). Benchmark portfolios were then used as standards or yardsticks in training teachers to score their own portfolios. For each of the accountability grade levels (4th, 8th, and 12th), a scoring manual was developed which delineated overall scoring standards, clarifications, and scoring decision rules at that grade level for each standard, and photocopied reproductions of benchmark portfolios representative of each of the four performance levels for that grade level. All teachers who had students with Alternate Portfolios at the 4th, 8th, and 12th grade levels then received a full-day training on portfolio scoring in Fall 1993 and were given the scoring manual(s) corresponding to their students' grade level(s) as a guide for scoring.

For each of the six standards, the student's portfolio is rated first on each standard individually. Each standard is evaluated holistically within the context of the entire portfolio (i.e., individual entries are not scored separately, but rather each standard is first scored across all entries). Based upon a rating of the six performance levels, a final holistic score of Novice, Apprentice, Proficient, or Distinguished is assigned to the student's portfolio, to be included in both the school and local district level accountability indices. Because the Alternate Portfolio has the equivalent impact in accountability index calculations of a student who participates in the general KIRIS accountability assessments, a score of "proficient" from the Alternate Portfolio has the same impact as a student who scores "proficient" in reading, mathematics, science, social studies, writing, arts and humanities, and practical living/vocational living. These cognitive indicators, along with noncognitive measures for all students, such as attendance, dropout and retention rates, and post-school outcomes, are employed to calculate a performance index for each school, which is then used as the baseline value for determining future school rewards or sanctions. For each two-year accountability cycle, the overall performance index for that cycle becomes the baseline for the next cycle, and a new threshold level is calculated as the target for that school for the subsequent biennium.

Professional Development

Training sessions on implementing and scoring the alternate assessments had an even broader purpose than just the assessment system. For example, the major purpose in designing yearly portfolio scoring training for teachers was to teach them how to score accurately and reliably. It was not intended that scoring training be an in-service on emerging best practices, yet many participants across the state commented that scoring training was the best in-service they had attended on "how to teach."

Development and Management

Implementing state-level alternate assessments required massive information dissemination and technical assistance networks for teachers. Technical assistance is largely provided by a statewide coordinator, who manages scoring procedures, provides professional development across the state, develops training materials, and disseminates information to teachers and local administrators. Regional leaders are in all of the eight educational regions in Kentucky at each of the 4th-, 8th-, and 12th-grade levels; these individuals are almost always classroom teachers. They act as co-leaders, in concert with the Statewide Alternate Portfolio Coordinator, at every implementation and scoring training. Teachers are encouraged to contact their respective regional leaders when they need guidance in portfolio development. In addition, each local school district has an Alternate Portfolio Support Leader, usually a classroom teacher, who is responsible for informing teachers within his or her district of any changes in assessment requirements, as well as portfolio due dates and scoring schedules. Without this regionalized and local district network, it would not be possible to provide support to teachers, especially new teachers, on a one-to-one level.

Funding for all assessment in Kentucky is set aside each year by state legislation. From a 6.5 million dollar expenditure, which covers implementing the assessment as well as the rewards and sanctions provided to the appropriate schools, approximately $102,000 annually is specifically allotted for alternate assessment. This covers staff salaries and supplies, training site expenses, teacher stipends to work in benchmark committees, the advisory boards and scoring portfolios at the state level, and teacher substitutes and travel reimbursement for district support leaders for two days of training.

Effects

The Alternate Portfolio Assessment has been used as a process to promote systemic change, looking at not only the intended but also the unintended consequences. Part of the internal measurement of success is looking at the concurrent validity of the Alternate Portfolio Assessment. The foundation for the assessment is the original mandated law of a totally inclusive assessment, based on the same academic expectations for all students, with a zero exemption rule. That decision governed subsequent guidelines and regulations in developing:

- shared content standards, evidenced through different performance standards;
- scoring rubrics modeled on regular assessment;
- shared assessment language for teachers, administrators, parents, and the community;
- a formula to integrate scores within a school's accountability index;
- district and school reports listing all student scores; and
- tracking procedures so that Alternate Portfolio scores are sent back to the student's neighborhood school to promote ownership of student learning.

STATE PRACTICE: MARYLAND

John Haigh

Background and Context

The Independence Mastery Assessment Program (IMAP) was developed in cooperation with the University of Maryland as an alternate accountability assessment to the Maryland School Performance Assessment Program (MSPAP), specifically targeted to students with Severe Cognitive Disabilities who otherwise would not be able to participate in MSPAP even with accommodations. Maryland's population is typical for a small to medium state. There are 24 local school districts in Maryland and 1,309 public schools and centers. The state population is 4,983,900 and the state ranks 42nd in size and 19th in population.

The Maryland State Board of Education approved the Maryland School Performance Data-Based Areas on April 25, 1990 (resolution number 1990-5), Standards for the Data-Based Areas on August 29, 1990, and Public School Standards (COMAR 13A.01.04), effective December 20, 1993.

Maryland's approach to the large-scale assessment and accountability is guided by three fundamental premises:

* **All children can learn.**
* **All children have the right to attend schools in which they can progress and learn.**
* **All children shall have a real opportunity to learn equally rigorous content.**

In general, all students are to be included in the accountability assessment. Exemptions are only in cases where the student is not pursuing the Maryland Learning Outcomes. Accommodations are available for students with disabilities or limited English, and students with 504 Accommodation Plans. A small number of students, (between 3-5% of the special education population) has the option of taking the alternate assessment, IMAP.

Foundations

IMAP is intended to provide an accountability measure for those students not accounted for through MSPAP. IMAP assessments occur at the same grades as MSPAP. Because Maryland's school system extends from birth to age 21, a preschool measure and a post-high school measure were added as well.

IMAP students include those with severe cognitive limitations, multiple disabilities, and autism who are not solely pursuing the Maryland Learning Outcomes. The assessment includes more basic life skill activities. These include Personal Management, Community, Career/Vocational, Recreation/Leisure, Communication, Decision Making, Behavior and Academics. Uses of IMAP data are similar to MSPAP, providing a snapshot of each school, school system, and the state. Data in the report can be used to make instructional decisions, improve performance, and measure improvement from year to year.

The philosophical assumption of IMAP is to create an instrument developed by teachers and parents that identifies key elements that are critical for this population of students. These elements reflect what these two groups believe students should know and be able to do by the time they leave school. The outcomes and indicators of the IMAP would provide the foundation and

direction for local curricular matches and development in alignment with the general education outcomes.

Eligibility

The local school IEP Team decides which assessment to use (IMAP or MSPAP), based on the student's goals. Students pursuing the Maryland Learning Outcomes cannot participate in IMAP. Students participating in IMAP do so at the same age or grades as MSPAP (grades 3,5,8), except that IMAP adds preschool, age 5, and high school, ages 17-21. The ages are what the local school system uses for their regular grade age. If the student is born on July 1 or before December 31, or whatever the school designates as the beginning of that year, that is what would normally be appropriate if the student was not disabled. The range for high school extends to ages 17-21, because some school systems have students with disabilities in this age range.

Compliance with eligibility is handled in several ways. The primary means of review is the local school audit, using MSPAP data. If student exemptions are high, that may trigger an initial audit. A second way in which a review is conducted involves looking at the numbers of students in a school district participating in IMAP. If the numbers are high based on the December 1 child count, that may trigger another review. Teachers also conduct a review that has immediate impact. Cadres of teachers are constantly being trained to score videos and portfolios, and they can immediately identify students they call "ringers" and inform their fellow teachers.

Content Standards

In addition to the following IMAP outcomes, there are specifically defined indicators for each of the assessment ages. The performance tasks are derived from the content or first four outcomes.

1. Personal Management
   Students will demonstrate their ability in the following areas: personal needs, appropriate health and safety practices, managing household routines, and participating in transition planning with adult service providers.

2. Community
   Students will demonstrate their ability to access community resources and get about safely in the environment.

3. Career and Vocational
   Students will demonstrate their ability to participate in transition to employment and in various employment opportunities.

4. Recreation and Leisure
   Students will demonstrate their ability to participate in recreational and leisure activities.

5. Communication
   Students will demonstrate their ability to express and receive communication through a variety of methods, to interact socially, and to meet functional needs. Student outcomes should be measured across and complement content outcomes. Support systems should be in place for communication outcomes.

6. Decision Making
   Students will demonstrate their ability to make decisions and choices, to resolve problems, to manage time, and to advocate for themselves. Student outcomes should be measured

across and complement content outcomes. Support systems should be in place for decision-making outcomes.

7. Behavior

   Students will demonstrate their ability to behave in chronologically age-appropriate ways in various situations. Student outcomes should be measured across and complement content outcomes. Support systems should be in place for behavior outcomes.

8. Academic

   Students will demonstrate the ability to apply correct and appropriate academic skills and knowledge at all times. Isolated academic skills (e.g. taught in inclusion content classes), tested for their value (identified in the IEP), must be co-developed by both of the student's general and special education teacher(s).

The enabling skills or last four outcomes match closely the general education "Skills for Success" outcomes, as do the Recreation / Leisure and Career / Vocational outcomes. The academic skills are an extension of the current Maryland Learning Outcomes beyond proficiency level 5. However, it is not the intent to have exactly the same outcomes as general education. If that were the case the students would be required to participate in the regular MSPAP assessment with accommodations, an option always available to the students.

School systems are encouraged to align their curriculum with both the Maryland Learning Outcomes and the IMAP outcomes and indicators. They may, at their discretion, include additional outcomes and indicators. Student IEP's are based on assessed need(s) to benefit from education. To the extent it makes sense to align student IEP's to curricular areas and individual assessments in those areas, it would be beneficial to align IEP goals and objectives.

Since both the MSPAP and IMAP are intended to be primarily used as program accountability instruments and not as student accountability assessments, neither assessment would be tied to either promotion or graduation.

Assessment Procedures

Currently the MSPAP is the only program accountability assessment of student knowledge. Included in the MSPAP are a number of other accountability data elements, such as attendance and dropout. IMAP is the only alternate program accountability assessment.

IMAP is an assessment system and therefore must be as rigorous in security efforts and penalties as the MSPAP. If IMAP is to be reported on the same basis as MSPAP, as the corollary that completes the accountability cycle, then every effort must be made to assure reliability, validity, and administrative feasibility. Reporting, training, and scoring efforts must be of the highest quality and consistency.

Teachers are required to initiate the student portfolio and allow for teacher-student dialogue in order for the student to maintain his portfolio. There should be many opportunities for the student to create products or showcase his efforts during the year. Portfolio contents should allow the student or student and teacher to reflect on the student's work, progress over time, and growth toward certain external criteria. Portfolios are scored on the inclusion of student work in each of the outcome areas and the results of two student on-demand performance tasks.

Student on-demand performance occurs through two videotaped authentic events. These performance tasks have been developed by teachers and parents and maintained through a continually rotating item bank with new and revised tasks added annually. Teachers identify one

task for the student and one other task is randomly assigned. Tasks must be performed during the assessment window of February each year. **Students are assessed at ages 5, 8, 10, 13, and during their junior year**. Age criteria are the same as the district eligibility for the specific grade. For example, if it is traditional for students whose birth dates are December 1 or September 1 or July 1 to be considered a 3rd, 5th, or 8th grader, than that is the grade or birth date that should be used. These ages provide parallel assessments times with MSPAP grade occurrences and IMAP program assessments for infants and preschool, elementary, middle, and secondary.

Two tasks are performed by each student at the target age, one chosen by the student's teacher and the second randomly chosen by the district testing coordinator. The portfolios are added to and updated throughout the school year by the student with assistance by the teacher when necessary. Performance tasks, parent surveys, and portfolios are all components of the IMAP assessment. Thus, the duration of the assessment extends throughout the year.

Since IMAP is part of a larger accountability system, there is no sampling procedure used. All students must be accounted for; therefore, all students are assessed.

The student's classroom teacher conducts the performance assessments and is frequently assisted with the video tape-recording. Portfolios are compiled during the year and the parent survey is distributed prior to the performance tasks with a parent approval form. The teacher and test coordinator for the district share responsibility for these activities. The coordinator collects the portfolios, tasks, and parent surveys and sends them to the state for scoring and reporting. Secure tasks are not distributed to test coordinators until late January for copying and distribution by the February window. After task dissemination to teachers, all remaining tasks are destroyed. Student tasks are included in the student's portfolio along with the written task descriptions to be used in scoring. Two meetings are held with IMAP coordinators which focus, in part, on test security and administration standardization.

Scoring, Reporting, and Use

Scores are generated for **student performance, school support,** and **parent perceptions** based on the survey. Two reports are generated as in the regular reporting. The first report is based on district performance where student scores are combined and reported at the district level, and the second report is an evaluation of the portfolio that includes scores for all the content domain areas and results of the student's performance and supports on both tasks. The first report is considered public information. The second report is generated at the request of teachers and is distributed to the student's classroom teachers so the teacher and student can use the results for further evaluation and program improvement. Confidentially for small cell sizes is protected by reporting only district-level data, although reporting can be analyzed to the student level as indicated by the portfolio report.

Both teachers and district administrators use the results in a variety of ways for multiple purposes. Teachers often mention the benefit of having outcomes and indicators. This enables them to monitor student development, receive input at intervals of student performance, and determine the effectiveness of their supports. Portfolios are used in parent conferences and occasionally during meetings to demonstrate how students will perform in a given situation. Administrators use reports to demonstrate progress and to determine where additional resources are needed. They maintain that the reports are not only effective for staff development but are critical in obtaining needed classroom and school resources when presented to their boards. They are also useful for administrative policy issue positions.

Professional Development

The outcomes and indicators (content standards, goals, outcomes) were developed during a pre-pilot study funded by the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs in cooperation with the University of Maryland. The study consisted of a number of factors including the identification and development of an initial set of outcomes and indicators as well as a procedural administrative implementation and reporting plan. A state advisory panel was identified to assist and provide direction to the study. The panel reviewed the outcomes, indicators, and process and provided feedback to focus and expert teams set up to initially identify outcomes, indicators, and the administrative procedures. Teachers, parents, administrators, assessment specialists, content field experts, and advocacy groups provided most of the input, revisions, and direction for IMAP. Content standards (outcomes), performance standards, and scoring criteria and rubrics have been discussed.

Three fundamental areas of program improvement are influenced by IMAP. First, the general IMAP information on outcomes and indicators set in motion local curricular alignments. Next, data gathered from IMAP results provides continuous benchmarks of program growth. Finally, scoring and new task development by teachers provide a hands-on in-service of best practices and new instructional pedagogy.

Development and Management

The stakeholders were the advisory panel and provided the leadership for IMAP. Basically, IMAP has been a grassroots development product that has undergone a number of changes during its design. The overriding development and management principle has been for IMAP to be a useful, purposeful, and economical tool for program accountability to be used in conjunction with the other larger statewide accountability measure MSPAP.

The funds needed for IMAP, based on current procedures, consist of: (a) allocations for advisory panel meetings, (b) cost of bulk videotape, (c) cameras, and (d) teacher stipends for scoring and task development. For a state the size of Maryland, with an estimated student population of 100,000, the alternate assessment would involve approximately 1,000 students (1% of the special population). The remaining students would be tested with MSPAP, and the continuing cost would be about $1,000 for advisory meetings, $2,500 for video tape, $3,000 for cameras, 50 teachers @$125 per day for 8 days for a total of $50,000, with a nominal cost of about $60,000 per year for portfolios, mailing, and reporting.

Reliability, validity, and authenticity are critical components of any assessment procedure and IMAP has built in a continuous review of validity and reliability updates. Johns Hopkins University provides analysis and reviews issues related to content, construct, and predictive validity. The state is also currently reviewing IEP goals, national content expert reviews, and inter-rater reliability measures.

Effects

Overall, IMAP has had a positive effect relative to teachers, supervisors, parents, and students. Linking training to outcomes and identifying outcomes for school systems seems to have been received favorably by teachers and supervisors. They have often commented that "it's good that now we have something to shoot for." For IEP teams it has meant that decisions on goals and objectives are very focused. Students are now pushed to participate in the general curriculum, with instructional accommodations, modifications, and adaptations available to them.

STATE PRACTICE: MICHIGAN

Lucian Parshall

Background and Context

Michigan consists of 722 school districts which serve 206,155 students with disabilities. Michigan has the ninth largest population of students enrolled in special education programs. Approximately 87% of this population spend some part of their day in general education. School districts in Michigan administer an annual large scale assessment test in reading and math at 4th, 7th, and 11th grade, and science, writing, and social studies in the 5th, 8th, and 11th grades. Michigan recently introduced a high school proficiency test as a high stakes graduation assessment. Parents are allowed to exempt their child from taking the Michigan Education Assessment Program (MEAP) if the student has a disability. This exemption changed a long-standing policy in Michigan which allowed only the IEP team to exempt students from taking the statewide assessment. It is estimated that in 1997 less than half the students with disabilities were involved in this statewide assessment. The results from MEAP can be reported to the district in two formats: one report of general education excluding students with disabilities, and a second report of all students.

Foundations

The Office of Special Education Services (OSES) addressed the demands for better accountability in 1987, when it contracted with Disability Research Systems, Inc. to design appropriate benchmarks and assessment tools for students with disabilities. It was anticipated that student performance indicators would (a) improve communication among school personnel and parents about the significant educational needs for students with disabilities, (b) improve instruction and align curriculum, and (c) improve appraisals of student progress. Evidence of accountability would hopefully be seen in individualized education plans of students, annual education reports filed by school districts, and focus of school improvement committee activities.

Materials were developed over seven years and became known as the Outcome Indicators for Special Education. Over the first five years of the project, several products were developed through lengthy processes involving Michigan stakeholders. These products include extensive research papers describing the unique educational needs of students with specific impairments. Program Outcome Guides, elaborating educational outcomes for students with different types of impairments, were produced, as well as multi-level assessments accompanying each Guide to help educators assess student progress toward achievement of the Outcomes.

Michigan plans to design a single alternate assessment instrument based on the content standards in the above material which can be used for its severe and moderately impaired population (those unable to take the state assessment) and then use the results to report both student performance and program improvement.

Eligibility

Those students eligible for the alternate assessment would be students whose ages are close to the age of 4th, 7th, and 11th graders and are moderately and severely disabled. In Michigan, this includes such categories as trainable and severely mentally impaired, some of the autistic impaired population, the multiply impaired students, and many physically impaired students. This population includes approximately 20,000 students with disabilities. Michigan believes that this approach will comply with both sections of the IDEA '97 regulations, which require the

implementation of an alternate assessment by the year 2000 as well as an annual report of student performance based on goals established in the state improvement plan.

Content Standards

The content standards being used are based upon the outcome materials described above which established student benchmarks in 12 different disability areas. These benchmarks have further evolved into four levels of student independence; full independence, functional independence, supported independence, and participation. Michigan's initial plans are to design an alternate assessment instrument to measure the levels of supported independence and participation (two lower levels). These two levels of independence do not, at this time, have a relationship with the Michigan Curriculum Framework (Academic Standards). While they are used to establish IEP goals, they do not relate to securing a high school diploma. The goal of the delivery system at this level is not to issue a piece of paper but to assure that students perform to the maximum extent in appropriate adult life roles. The content standards are as follows:

Performance Expectations for Students Who Will
Achieve Supported Independence in Major Life Roles
(Moderate Impairment)

Performance Expectation 1	Complete personal care, health, and fitness activities
Performance Expectation 2	Complete domestic activities in personal living environments
Performance Expectation 3	Manage personal work assignments
Performance Expectation 4	Complete activities requiring transactions in the community
Performance Expectation 5	Participate effectively in group situations
Performance Expectation 6	Respond effectively to unexpected events and potentially harmful situations
Performance Expectation 7	Manage unstructured time
Performance Expectation 8	Proceed appropriately toward the fulfillment of personal desires

Performance Expectations for Students Who Will
Achieve Participation in Major Life Roles
(Severe or Profoundly Impaired)

Performance Expectation 1	Engage in typical patterns of leisure and productive activities in the home and community
Performance Expectation 2	Engage in a typical pattern of interactions
Performance Expectation 3	Participate in effective communication cycles
Performance Expectation 4	Participate in personal care, health, and safety routines
Performance Expectation 5	Reach desired locations safely within familiar environments

The two higher functional levels (full independence and functional independence) may include academic standards, similar to general education benchmarks, along with those unique performance expectations designed for students with milder disabilities.

Assessment Procedures

Assessment procedures are currently in development. Phase one involves the alignment of special education curriculum with the above standards. Phase two will begin in the 1998-99 school year and refine the scoring rubric.

Here is an example of a scoring rubric being explored at this time:

1 - makes no attempt to demonstrate the performance requirement even though the student is given the opportunity to do so;

2 - does not meet the standard of acceptable performance, but attempts to demonstrate the requirements;

3 - meets the standard of acceptable performance, that is, completes the performance requirement; and

4 - performs above and beyond acceptable performance, that is, performs beyond what is expected of the student.

However, another alternative for scoring could be:

No	0	1-2	3-4
No Opportunity to observe student	No Performance (student did nothing although given the opportunity to perform)	Emerging Performance (student did something but performance was not at expected level of quality)	Acceptable Performance (student performed as expected)

The scoring rubric would be applied to each performance indicator and would specify adequacy and quality of the performance.

The collection of performance ratings on various activities provide important information on the student's overall performance for a given performance indicator. For example, the student performance expectation demonstrating effective response skills (PE 6) might include numerous indicators such as (a) safety in handling harmful objects or materials; (b) ability to identify procedures for seeking assistance; (c) identification of travel safety procedures; (d) demonstration of appropriate behavior when coughing, sneezing, or blowing nose; and (e) identification of safety and warning signs in the environment. Each of these skills would be assessed with several performance activities for which a scoring rubric would be written.

The information collected using the scoring rubric would become the data on individual students which would be compiled and used to rate the student or aggregated for each program. It is anticipated that actual assessment will occur over a prescribed time frame setup in the fall of each school year. An appropriate data-gathering instrument will be constructed in phase two. The primary outcome of phase two will be a reliable instrument and test administration procedure. Phase three will involve training, policy development, computerization, analysis, and reporting procedures.

Scoring, Reporting, and Use

It is expected that the scores generated by the alternate assessment instrument will be able to establish the percent of growth on a performance expectation over time. The scores could be reported annually by the special education programs measuring the student performance. Reports would provide both student indicators of success as well as progress towards achieving stated performance expectations in our State Improvement Plan.

For small districts with few students, relatively large differences in average scores are to be expected even if the quality of education provided by the program remains unchanged. Consequently, a district may show a relatively large increase one year and a relatively large decrease the next or visa versa. Consequently, in some cases districts may show improvement only if they fail to make adequate process for two consecutive years.

The use of rolling averages is a potential method for stabilizing data based on small numbers of students. Rolling averages of two years might also be used to reduce the spurious year-to-year fluctuations resulting from measurement or reliability. Using this method, Michigan could compare the average performance from years 1 and 2 to the average performance from years 2 and 3 to determine progress. After the first two-year period, data would be reviewed annually, based on the prior two years' average results.

Professional Development

Currently, no professional development is occurring. Training will begin once phase one is completed and the curriculum is aligned with the performance expectations so that the instrument (designed in phase two) will accurately measure what the students have been taught. Based upon these results, phase three will involve statewide training on the performance indicators, scoring criteria, interpretation, IEP development, and district reporting formats.

Development and Management

The performance indicators were developed through a $4.5 million project funded by the state of Michigan over seven years. The performance indicators, which are the foundation of what will be measured by the alternate assessment, had several hundred internal and external developers which established face validity. As these performance indicators are aligned with the curriculum, measured by staff, and reported as required under IDEA '97, Michigan is using a steering committee to guide its policy and full implementation towards an effective practice.

Effects

The Performance Expectations represent a different focus for schools in that they do not dictate academic content (e.g., math, science, or social studies), but instead describe effective human behaviors, including cognitive processes (e.g., manipulation of information, problem solving, systems analysis), personal work characteristics (e.g., efficient at task completion, personally responsible), and interpersonal effectiveness (e.g., ability to work with others). While knowledge remains central to education, the Performance Expectations emphasize what students *do* rather than what they know. This view has important implications for both instruction and assessment.

The schools of today are primarily focused on the attainment of basic academic skills that allow students to successfully participate in standardized achievement test programs and accumulate credits toward high school graduation and college entrance. Schools will need to change this orientation if they wish to prepare graduates who can successfully compete in a global market which demands much more than knowledge alone.

It is anticipated that the alternate assessment will help focus curriculum and instructional approaches throughout the state towards the adult life roles. It is also expected that the performance expectations will drive transition planning in all disability areas and refocus the need for special education to address issues beyond receiving a diploma towards quality of life issues.

STATE PRACTICE: MISSOURI

Melodie Friedebach

Background and Context

Demographics

Missouri's 525 public school districts reported an enrollment of 893,241 students at the beginning of the 1997-1998 school year. Approximately 80% of these students are enrolled in approximately 20% of the districts. Missouri, like most states, has a large number of small rural districts along with the three major metropolitan centers of Kansas City, St. Louis, and Springfield. Missouri also has a significant number of students enrolled in private or parochial schools and a growing number of students who are home schooled. 13.5% of the students enrolled in Missouri's public schools are identified as disabled under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

Legislation

In 1993, the Missouri Legislature passed the Outstanding Schools Act which required: (a) the establishment of no more than 75 performance standards which would define what students in Missouri schools should know and be able to do upon graduation, (b) the establishment of curriculum frameworks to assist local school districts in meeting the standards, (c) the development of a new assessment system that was based on the performance standards, and (d) the expansion of professional development opportunities for teachers to effect changes in curriculum and instruction.

District and school scores on the performance assessment are used for accountability and accreditation of Missouri school districts. Schools can be identified as academically deficient. At this time, high school diplomas are not dependent upon a certain score on the state assessment.

The Show-Me Standards were developed by Missouri teachers and adopted by the Missouri State Board of Education in January of 1996. The Show-Me Standards include 33 process standards that are grouped under the following four broad goals and 40 knowledge standards, which in turn are grouped by six subject or content areas.

Process standards are grouped under four broad goals:

Missouri students will acquire the knowledge and skills to:

1) gather, analyze, and apply information and ideas,
2) communicate effectively within and beyond the classroom,
3) recognize and solve problems, and
4) make decisions and act as responsible member of society.

Knowledge standards are grouped under six content areas:

- communication arts,
- mathematics,
- science,
- social studies,
- fine arts, and
- health and physical education.

In June of 1997, the Missouri State Board of Education adopted the rule on student assessment that requires each local school district to develop a written plan for assessing all students. The rule further requires that the plan include all available components of the Missouri Assessment Program developed as part of the Outstanding Schools Act of 1993 and that the assessments shall be used to monitor the progress of ALL students on the Show-Me Standards and to identify areas for instructional improvement. Local districts are also required to include ALL students in the accountability process.

An alternate assessment in Missouri can assure that all students enrolled in Missouri public schools will be included in both the state assessment program and the accountability system for Missouri's public schools. The development process for the alternate assessment follows, whenever possible, the process used for the development of the MAP-subject area assessments.

In the Spring of 1998, the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education convened an Alternate Assessment Committee to begin the development process for the MAP-A. The purpose of the meeting was to review the Show-Me Standards and determine those appropriate for an alternate assessment. The participants were also to develop a proposed "process" for the alternate assessment.

The Alternate Assessment Committee represented elementary, middle, and secondary teachers of students with significant disabilities, and parents and college faculty from nine regions across the state. The participants had agreed, as part of this experience, to return to their region and conduct a meeting to share the results of the initial meeting with other teachers, local district administrators, and parents. During April and May, over 500 additional stakeholders participated in the nine regional meetings and provided structured feedback. The Alternate Assessment Committee will reconvene on June 11-12 to review the input from the regional meetings.

Foundations

The Missouri Assessment Program serves the following purposes:

- improving students' acquisition of important knowledge, skills and competencies;
- monitoring the performance of Missouri's educational system;
- empowering students and their families to improve their educational prospects; and
- supporting teachers and the learning process.

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education contracted with CTB/ McGraw Hill to assist the State in the development of performance assessments that are aligned with the Show-Me Standards. Performance assessments will be developed for each of the six content areas. Each performance assessment will be developed with three distinct parts: (a) multiple choice which is linked to the Terra Nova survey and produces a norm referenced score, (b) constructed responses, and (c) performance events.

During the Spring of 1998, the administration of MAP-MATH will be required in grades 4, 8, and 10. Participation in the MAP-Communication Arts and the MAP-Science is voluntary during the spring of 1998 and will be required in the spring of 1999. The assessments for the remaining three content areas and the alternate assessment for students with moderate to profound cognitive disabilities are in various stages of development. All assessments in the Missouri Assessment Program will be developed and required by the year 2001.

Students with disabilities who participate in the MAP subject area assessments under standardized testing conditions receive both a norm referenced score (based on the Terra Nova Survey) and an achievement level score. The five achievement levels are: Step One, Progressing, Nearing Proficiency, Proficient and Advanced.

Accommodations have been developed for the MAP subject area assessments for those students with disabilities whose IEP team has determined them necessary and appropriate. Students with disabilities who use accommodations receive an achievement level score. The scores for all students with disabilities are aggregated into the district's achievement scores.

Eligibility

Eligibility for the MAP-A will be determined by the student's IEP team. The decision will be documented in the student's IEP. The IEP team will determine the appropriateness of a student's participation for each of the MAP subject area assessments or portions of those assessments. If the IEP team determines that the child's participation in the MAP subject areas assessments is not appropriate, then the student will be eligible for the MAP-A.

Decisions about the participation of students in the MAP-A will be based on the goals of their instruction. Students with disabilities, whose instructional goals are expected to lead to typical work, school, and life experiences should take the MAP subject area assessments. Students who are working toward basic self care and basic life skills are appropriate for the MAP-A.

The Department anticipates less than 2% of all students in a district, including students that reside in the district but receive their education in settings apart from the district, should require an alternate assessment. This will typically be students with moderate to profound cognitive disabilities.

It has been recommended that students will participate in the MAP-A in the year in which they are 9, 13, and 17 as of August 1.

Content Standards

The Alternate Assessment Committee at their initial meeting agreed that the Show-Me Standards are appropriate for the MAP-A when framed in a functional context. The committee also recommended that in order to assist teachers in developing appropriate curriculum, a curriculum framework should be developed based on the Show-Me Standards that would incorporate this functional context. Further, this framework will be a model that teachers of students with significant cognitive disabilities can use to assure that the Show-Me Standards are incorporated into their curriculum, classroom instruction, and IEPs. This recommendation aligns the MAP-A with the requirements of the Outstanding Schools Act in the same manner that curriculum frameworks were developed for the six content areas.

In addition to the Curriculum Frameworks, the Department developed Assessment Annotations for the Curriculum Frameworks. These documents provide guidance to local districts on the content and processes that have been identified by Missouri teachers as appropriate for assessment at the grade levels assessed. It is anticipated that the development of a similar document will be important for the MAP-A at the age levels assessed.

Assessment Procedures

The Alternate Assessment Committee recommended a "portfolio" approach for the MAP-A. During the year in which a student is required to participate in the MAP-A, a "collection of information" will be gathered that will reflect and demonstrate the student's performance, as well as the system supports that the student receives in his or her educational program. This collection or portfolio would be submitted to the state for scoring between May 15 and June 15.

Documents suggested for evaluating the student's performance include: (a) parent information, (b) IEP, (c) videotapes of student, samples of student work (either group or individual), (d) documented interviews with the student or others familiar with the student, (e) photos, (f) student schedule or resume, (g) data charts on student performance, (h) anecdotal notes, and (i) developmental checklist. The participants were cautioned to give consideration for the cost and burden on the teachers who would be responsible for collecting the documents for submission.

The evaluation of "system supports" will assess the supports provided to the student. Supports that were recommended for consideration include: (a) opportunities for interactions with nondisabled peers, (b) opportunity to perform skills in a variety of settings,(c) assistive technology, (d) system of communication, (e) behavioral supports, (f) accommodations, and (g) related services supports.

Scoring, Reporting, and Use

The committee recommended that the documents submitted for scoring would be assessed by using a scoring guide that could result in specific level(s) of student achievement. The levels of student achievement or performance will be the same achievement levels that have been established for all other MAP assessments: Step 1, Progressing, Nearing Proficiency, Proficient, and Advanced.

The areas in which the student's achievement will be assessed will be related to the Show- Me Standards. Rather than assessing the student's achievement on each of the 73 standards, the committee recommended that each student's achievement be rated on 10 "areas of student achievement." These 10 areas are the 6 content areas and the 4 four goal areas.

Thus, the proposed scoring guide would have the 10 "areas of student achievement" along the vertical axis and the five levels of student achievement across the horizontal axis. The committee has not yet recommended if the various levels of achievement in these 10 areas should be synthesized into an overall student score for performance, or if individual student scores for each of the subject areas should stand alone so they could be aggregated into the district's specific MAP assessments.

Teachers will be trained and must qualify before they can score the MAP-A.

State-level data on the number and percentage of students with disabilities participating in the MAP subject area assessments and the MAP alternate assessment will be collected and reported yearly. State-level data on the performance of students with disabilities on all MAP assessments will also be reported on a yearly basis. District-level data will be reviewed as a part of the school accreditation process. At this time, there is no requirement for districts to disaggregate scores for students with disabilities and publicly report on their performance on state assessments.

Professional Development

The state has invested in the professional development of teachers in the development and scoring of MAP subject area assessments. This expectation continues with the MAP-A. Professional development needs will be considered and identified as the development process continues.

Development and Management

On June 11 and 12, the Alternate Assessment Committee will meet to share the results of the regional meetings and to identify the process for the Alternate Assessment that will be field tested during the 1998-99 school year.

The MAP-A will be administered by the Division of Instruction as a part of the Missouri Assessment Program in collaboration with the Division of Special Education. The intent is for the MAP-A to be viewed in the state as a part of the MAP and accountability system for Missouri schools, not as a special education activity.

Effects

The MAP-A will serve the same purposes as the MAP: (a) to improve students' acquisition of knowledge and skills, (b) to monitor the performance of Missouri's educational system, (c) to empower students and their families to improve their educational prospects, and (d) to support teachers and the learning process for students with the most significant learning challenges.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Ken Olsen

The federal requirements for each state to establish a fully inclusive and operational large-scale assessment system by July 1, 2000 have led to extensive development activity. States must address at least seven issues in developing alternate assessment systems, including: responding to questions about (a) the rationale for the system, (b) eligibility, (c) standards, (d) timing, (e) procedures and instruments, (f) reporting and use, and (g) training and development. The practices in five states were described. Two of the states, Kentucky and Maryland, have systems that are operational or near-operational. Michigan is preparing to adopt or adapt portions of a system that has been evolving for seven years and Colorado and Missouri are still in the initial stages of working through the issues.

These five states provide a fairly comprehensive sample of the stages of development of state systems in Spring 1998. Other states have taken significant steps to establish criteria and standards (e.g., West Virginia, North Carolina and New York) while many states are just now beginning to address the issues. Some patterns are emerging in the development of alternate assessments.

Foundations and Effects

Most states are attempting to develop the alternate assessment as an extension of the general assessment system, with an emphasis on both accountability and program improvement. They expect the assessment and accountability processes to help teachers focus on specific curricula. They see their systems as vehicles for ongoing professional development as well as a means to increase links to general education.

Eligibility

Eligibility criteria are still evolving, but it is clear that the alternate assessments are intended for students who have the most significant disabilities. IEP teams will be making the decisions. Their judgments might involve decisions about the extent to which the students are involved in the general education curriculum, whether the students are pursuing a diploma, and the extent to which the general education test can be accommodated without invalidating it. In addition, states are building in protections to ensure that decisions are not the result of sensory disabilities, absenteeism, or inadequate teaching. In general, the students with moderate and severe cognitive disabilities are being considered for inclusion. It remains to be seen, however, whether the 2% criterion established by Heumann and Cantu (1997) will be met, since many state testing programs do not currently allow extensive accommodations.

Content Standards

States appear to have taken two different paths in articulating the standards that would serve as the basis for alternate assessment. Some states (e.g., Colorado, Kentucky, and Missouri) elected to extend or reinterpret the content and performance standards that apply to all students. These states selected a subset of the larger set of most academic standards and indicated how those standards apply to students with significant disabilities. Burgess and Kennedy (1998) have documented the practices of such states and suggested a general process for linking alternate assessment standards to the general education curriculum. Other states (e.g., Maryland and Michigan) are choosing to define the specific life skills that are the primary focus of programs for students with more severe disabilities. These states focus on the basic adaptive skills needed to function in society.

Assessment, Reporting, and Use

Only Kentucky and Maryland have proceeded to the actual stages of assessment and reporting for this population. Kentucky uses portfolios which are given a holistic score. Maryland uses performance tasks, portfolios, and parent surveys. Both states include system supports in their scoring criteria in order to ensure equity and to focus local personnel on appropriate supports. Both states involve teachers in rating the results with the added benefit of staff sharing and personnel development. Only the Kentucky system is currently included in its state's accountability system and reflected in school rewards and sanctions.

Development and Management

All five states included in this report used stakeholder task forces to help them make decisions. In some cases, a small state team developed drafts for field reviews; in others, a large team was formed and sub-committees took on specific roles. Funding for development came from a variety of sources. Kentucky's funding was through the general education assessment contractor. The Maryland and Michigan efforts began with federally funded projects. To date, Colorado and Missouri have used state and federal discretionary funds to support their efforts.

On to 2000

Other than the Kentucky and Maryland systems, state efforts on alternate assessment are still in their infancy. State stakeholders will continue to struggle with the issues outlined in this paper as they develop a system that meets federal requirements and state needs by the July 1, 2000 deadline. This document should provide at least one basis for state decision making.

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